MS 258 462 the flooded banks of all the rivers in the Mosengere-Basakata region. When the nature of the ground and the level of the river permit, the grass is spread out on the spot to dry in the sun, while in flooded areas the woman loads the harvest in the canoe and takes it to the temporary village set up [108] on the bank. The dry grass is packed in stacks which are like the haystacks on our European farms.

MS 258 When a family deems that its harvest of grass is sufficient, the chief of the group prepares the incinerating grounds or furnace. Pulverized earth from small termites' nests is mixed with mud from the river. The mixture is well worked and kneaded so as to make a firm and pliant paste and is then spread over the surface of a small hole from 15 to 20 centimeters deep and one or two meters square.

MS 258 462 When this coating is entirely dry, the women begin their work. One of them loads the furnace and lights it, while the others bring in grass from the stacks.

As the first pile burns down, the woman in charge of the

Fig. 63. Stacks of Salt Grass, among the Bobaie.

MS [533] furnace throws in new sheaves, and the work, accompanied by a low, monotonous chant, continues without pause until the full harvest of salt grass is burned.

MS 258 834 462 The burning usually lasts a whole day. During this time and during the period when the furnace is being prepared, all

sexual relations are strictly forbidden between the head of the family and the woman in charge of the burning.

When the last sprig is burned, the fire extinguished, and the ashes cold, the women heap them in large baskets.

Meanwhile the head of the family has made a sort of large funnel out of broad and tough rattan splints, bound with fine thongs of raffia stems and lianas. These funnels vary between two and three meters in height. The diameter of the large opening is one and a half to two meters. The bottom is formed by the cluster of rattan splints, roughly tied with a broad rattan thong. This funnel is placed upright between three or four sticks planted in the ground. An earthenware jar is placed under the funnel. The women line the inside of the funnel with banana leaves, placed on top of each other in such a way as to make the sides completely [109] waterproof. They next pour the ashes from the incineration into the funnel, pressing and squeezing them as much as possible.

When the funnel is three-fourths full, the woman draws about ten pots of water, or about 50 liters, and pours them over the ashes. This water takes two or sometimes three days to spread through the ashes. When the ashes are saturated, the woman pours two or three more pots of water into the funnel. From then on there is a slow drain of water, strongly salted from the dissolution of the soluble alkaline matter contained in the ashes. The water is caught in the earthenware jar under the funnel. The woman thus obtains four or five pots of a strong salt solution and two pots of water less saturated with salt. After putting aside her six or seven pots of salt water, the woman lights a fire and puts one or several earthenware bowls over it. Into these, little by little, she pours the strong salt solution, which she allows to boil.

When the water evaporates, the first salt deposit forms on the bottom and sides of the bowl.

The heat from these evaporation hearths is so intense that it is impossible to come near them. The woman therefore carefully provides herself with two long ladles to refill the bowls at a distance as the evaporation progresses. The whole lot is left on the fire until all the salt water is evaporated. Even after the evaporation is completed, the woman leaves the jar over the fire, which she stokes, so as to completely dry and solidify the salt deposit. This

304 833 certain parts of the female body is very exciting to them, essentially as a result of the very pronounced movements of the woman during sexual contact. This explanation, which according to the natives seems to be the only reason for tattooing the women of certain tribes (this applies, in our opinion, to the Bateke, Banfumungu, Baboma, and, up to a certain point, to all the riparian peoples of Lake Leopold II), also enables us to explain the special character of the tattooing of Yaelima women. It extends all around the mons Veneris, follows the fold of the groin, and continues in concentric circles on the inside of the upper thighs. The tattoo scars on these parts of the woman's body are usually more symmetrical and in more pronounced relief, and these characteristics increase in direct proportion to the nearness of the pubic region. Coquetry cannot be the reason for making these raised scars. Their presence is largely hidden, even by the flimsiest and most primitive loincloth. Among certain tribes, the loincloth completely covers this part of the body, and since native women exercise a great deal of care and modesty in hiding these tattoos from the public eye, it was only with great difficulty that we were able to verify their existence. Let us note in passing [834] that despite earnest endeavors, we never were able to persuade a native woman of the interior to be photographed without her loincloth. The civilized women, whether local demimondaines or housewives, were, it is true, less [191] timid. The natives themselves make a distinction between these tattoos and those which appear on other parts of the body, notably on the arms, back, and face.

304 832 Tattoos on the back, arms, and throat are always essentially decorative. We found them especially on the women, who are coquettish by nature even among the most primitive peoples. These tattoos generally lack the characteristic uniformity which is such a clear mark of the racial tattoos. The latter are found in their most characteristic form on the men, particularly on the forehead, temples, cheeks, and sometimes the chest. Among certain tribes, the women have also taken over this artificial deformation peculiar to the men. Elsewhere, the women have special tattoos which are clearly distinct from those of the men, and, finally, among some peoples the women have no racial tattoos.

000 delicacy of a person's sexual modesty, the better that person is armed -- all other things [51] being equal -- against the excesses of passion. The habits of lust, on the other hand, dull and weaken the sense of modesty.

On the basis of these psychological and moral considerations as well as the facts of experience, it is impossible to say that a people is lacking in modesty simply because of the fact that they clearly have sensual tendencies and show a good deal of lasciviousness.

● 834 Among the Nkundó one should not expect the delicate sentiments found among some other peoples, especially those strongly influenced by Christian morality. But modesty is not unknown to them.

In the lines to follow we will say nothing more about the instinct of sexual modesty, which I think has been to a great extent blunted among the Nkundó, but of modesty in manner, which is an indication of inner modesty. The comparatively strict rules by which the Nkundó community tries to protect modesty shows that these people are fully aware of the value of that instinct as a safeguard against human weakness.

In general they hide the manifestations of sexual passion. In addition, certain practices which they favor show their attitude toward this matter; we will examine them in greater detail. It should be noted that, as we will see below, modesty among the Nkundó extends to situations where we would not consider it applicable, and vice versa, because of differences in the attitude toward certain questions.

Ethnologists in general consider the following among the chief effects (or indications) of modesty: the wearing of clothing (1) and

> 1. Although the wearing of clothing is a precaution arising from modesty, it has been asserted that the lack of garments is no proof of the lack of this sentiment.

the existence of regulations concerning the decency and [52] discretion which in word or deed should be observed between persons of the same sex and, more especially, toward persons of the opposite sex.

291 speaking. (1) Is this custom in some way related to modesty? The
581

1. See Chapter VI, Article VI.

[606] same question may be raised with respect to another strict rule of decorum which forbids a man to look his mother-in-law in the face. (2)

2. For details concerning this custom, see Chapter VI, Article V, 1.

It can readily be answered in the affirmative. (3)

3. Nevertheless, see Chapter X, Article II, 3.

784 The rule of decorum which forbids a man to sit down on a
516 seat where a woman is seated who is not his wife seems to me also to be dictated by sexual modesty. On the other hand, stepping over the seat under such circumstances has nothing whatever to do with this feeling. The purpose of this practice is to enable the person seated (regardless of sex) to avoid the evil repercussions of a charm or magic spell in his or her possession. (4)

4. Contrary to the explanation given by Jadot in Blancs et Noirs au Congo Belge (Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

291 Is the native ashamed to show his nakedness? Let us beware
834 of answering this question in general terms. In order to have an idea of the situation which is sufficiently clear and precise, various cases and circumstances must be taken into account.

1) First of all it can be stated that in the normal course of daily living the Nkundó, men as well as women, do all they can to hide their genital organs. That is to say that basically they are

291 embarrassed by the glances of others. This feeling extends even to
834 other parts of the body which, irrespective of the degree of culture they have reached, most peoples try to cover. [55]

2) Between persons of the same sex and age a certain freedom
834 is permitted. This may be observed especially among young boys
514 when they have to urinate. In our countries of Europe the situation is no different. I must say, however, that I have only noticed this freedom in the schools and never in the villages of the interior. Is there a gap in my observations, or should this laxity in the schools be attributed to the influence of the law of least effort (the suitable places in the schools are at some distance) and to the lack of leisure available to the pupils given the shortness of recreation periods on the one hand and their love of play on the other? It is also possible that among these boys modesty has barely made its appearance, since this feeling is strongly linked to the sexual instinct and awakens only with the latter. It would also seem that living in a group tends to reduce the power of modesty.

834 3) It is obvious that sexual excitement runs counter to modesty
832 and that sometimes -- especially among young people -- immodest acts may be used to arouse another person, especially in situations, such as bathing, which lend themselves easily to such actions.

515 4) Bathers, whether washing or swimming, are very careless,
834 especially when they are in a group of their own sex and age. In former times no doubt they did not indulge in the luxury of even a rudimentary bathing costume. But at the present time it is not at all difficult for them to obtain the small piece of cloth needed for that purpose. Nevertheless, nude bathing in rivers and streams is a common practice. It is far more frequent among women than among men. The natives with whom I have discussed the subject attribute this fact to levity and a lack of concern; but they see nothing very wrong in it. Whether or not [56] the bathers are in a group also seems to make a difference. If you surprise one or two people under such circumstances, they will hide in haste. If, on the other hand, you find a dozen, they will not move; on the contrary, they will interrupt their toilette to watch you pass. Perhaps they are simply unconcerned about their nakedness. But it is also possible that they

515 834 are reassured by the fact that they are in a group, so that no one feels singled out by the gaze of the passer-by. Washing away from major streams is always surrounded by more propriety. For this purpose a [343] small enclosure (ikomba) is built behind the hut or among the banana trees, or a small thicket is allowed to grow there. By this means the native is sheltered from indiscreet glances if he wants to take a [157] bath or give himself an enema. As a matter of fact these things are done preferably after dark.

834 152 5) Violent anger or sorrow drown out modesty, just as they momentarily destroy the use of reason and suppress all feelings which are contradictory or simply different. In this situation, too, the man shows himself superior to the woman. He is less impulsive, calmer, less prone to lose control of his actions, to be carried away by his anger. Thus he almost never strips himself bare. The woman, on the other hand, readily strips off all her clothing. This behavior is extremely common; a woman undresses completely whenever she experiences great sorrow or intense anger. Luckily for propriety's sake some friend or relative always hastens to cover at least the essential parts. For a woman who throws off her clothing exposes herself to the mockery and jeers of spectators. (1)

[593]x [578]

1. An angry woman may also undress to shame her husband; it is a way of insulting and mocking him.

833 6) The Nkundó practice sexual intercourse only at night. I believe that this custom is due to their sense of propriety, [57] supplemented by a superstitious explanation which will be described in detail in Article V.

593x 834 7) The sense of modesty has its fullest expression in relation to parents, brothers, sisters, etc. Thus it is unheard of that a son should see his mother naked: bǒna ătɛ̆nâkâ ĕsunvĭ nvangó. If an adult daughter is ill and requires personal care (such as an enema, for example), the father has to take care of her himself if no other female relative is near by. But their sense of modesty is such that they both shed tears over the event. As a matter of fact this situation

593
834 arises but rarely. Furthermore, if a daughter is required to perform similar duties for her father, she will undertake this obligation only
[539] with the lament: njôy'ɔ́ɔna ɛ̌kɪ́ 'm wímáká, "I have come to see where I had my origin." Any woman who has been in that position will later know no oath more sacred than this one: la botaká wǎ fafá bɔ̌kɪ́ 'm wɛ̌náká la mpaka, "by my father's nakedness which I saw when he was old."

834 Thus we can draw the conclusion that the Nkundɔ́ are offended
291 by nakedness and as a rule do not tolerate it. The exceptions do not invalidate this generalization; on the contrary, they tend to support it.

2. Speech. Obscenities and propriety.

521 In general the Nkundɔ́ see nothing wrong with using obscene
831 expressions. They only describe them as "bad" if they become indecent.
195 If a conversation touches on matters of sex, they may wonder whether a particular topic is necessary, interesting, or entertaining; they will not ask themselves whether it is moral. For it will be apparent throughout this study they have no concept of morality strictly speaking.

The Nkundɔ́ possesses a varied and extensive list of obscene words -- nor is he alone in this respect. [58] We are not compiling a dictionary, and therefore we will not list them. What interests us are the circumstances that make these words indecent and under which a proper use of them impossible. The circumstances provide us with a criterion of the degree of obscenity of a word or expression. Let us say at once that we include in this category not only terms applied to organs and phenomena which are of a sexual nature strictly speaking, but also words pertaining to certain anatomical parts or physiological functions such as, for example, excretion, hair and tattooing found on private parts, and the female garment called efufa. We
[184] should also point out that some tribes will consider expressions obscene which do not shock others at all.

514 576 even answer her husband, but he may indicate his presence by coughing lightly.

514 576 578 831 Any infraction of these rules is considered a grave insult. A person offended in this manner may seek revenge by violent means, either personally or through the medium of his son, brother, etc. According to native justice he will always be in the right, even if the quarrel becomes bloody. The simple act of uttering obscenities while passing in front of a house in which there is someone who is entitled to the speaker's respect may result in reprisals by the latter. (1)

1. See Jadot, Blancs et Noirs au Congo belge [Whites and Blacks in the Belgian Congo], p. 90.

578 834 Crude language is especially reprehensible and wounding if it contains allusions to incest or other reflections on a relative whom the speaker wants to insult. And it must be admitted that such expressions may go beyond the limits (for example: coi cum patre, matre, fratre, sorore, etc.). In connection with this topic it should be noted that reference is always made to a relative of the opposite sex to that of the person who is directly or indirectly being addressed. Furthermore, licentious talk and the use of indecorous language are more severely condemned when they take place in the presence of [554] women and old people [60] or are said by a slave in front of his master, by a Botswa in front of a Bootɔ (1).

1. See Introduction, footnote 2, p. 4.

578 604 834 If a man catches anyone uttering obscenities in front of his wife, especially if they are addressed to her personally, he can start action in adultery proceedings. If the woman refuses to listen to the seducer, she will not answer him, or sometimes, annoyed at the insult, she may retort by insulting his mother. She can complain, but generally she does not do so. Is she ashamed, or is she afraid that the tempter might make public some excess in her conduct which he has discovered? In any case a woman is more sensitive than a man to the

578 shame of obscenities. They say: ɔlekɾ nsɔ̃nvi ɛ̂ bitɔ̃li ɲ'kɔ̃moto.
684 Bɔ̃moto ndɛ́ ndota (itɔ̃fa) "A woman is a ndota snake. Just as that
●834 reptile twists through the grass and rolls up as soon as it sees a man approaching, so a woman finds it difficult to endure any obscenity."

The ideal way to be sure whether an expression is actually considered indecent is to check whether it may be used in the presence of a close relative, for a Nkundɔ́ never utters an obscenity in front of such a person.

195 Among the Nkundɔ́, as in Europe, certain indelicate exclama-
578 tions are so deeply rooted that they seem to have lost their original
834 meaning, that is, most of the population no longer thinks of it at all. That a few more serious and modest individuals are still aware of it is apparent from the way they change the pronounciation of the terms in question.

Licentious expressions are never considered indecent and shock no one when they are uttered in a group or during group activities.
[571] Such activities include communal fishing and hunting expeditions, [61] drinking parties, dances, funerals, and -- at the present time -- communal work on a road, a resthouse, etc.

Thus we see that in these matters there is a remarkable discretion side by side with a certain degree of tolerance, which may be carried quite far. Licentious remarks are not condemned in themselves, but only because of fortuitous circumstances, so we see that the Nkundɔ́ do not consider them from a moral point of view, as we do, but from a social one. But the fact that those are precisely the words which can become indecent and socially bad shows that the native sees in their content something shocking, shameful, some quality likely to give offense. The freedom exercised in certain cases does not alter this general conclusion but simply gives evidence of he inclinations of a passionate nature.

3. Dances

535 Nkundɔ́ dances change periodically, as is the fashion in Europe. Old dances are given up after a time and are replaced by others which are newly invented or recently introduced. The dances fashionable at the present time came from the Besongɔ́, who are by

595 177 831 may be ribald, but this occurs rather rarely. However, at the present time, they are often actually obscene -- especially since "European-style" dancing has been introduced, and more particularly in the centers, small and large, and among those who have come under [63] its influence. This kind of dancing for amusement is chiefly practiced by young people.

To the credit of morality it should be noted that mixed dancing is unknown to strictly native ways. It occurs in the centers (in the form of the mixed bofenya or the balinga, grotesque imitations of European dances) but is spreading -- and rapidly -- to the villages of the interior. The second variety especially raises havoc, for it has a deleterious influence on morality. It has been the cause of a number of cases of adultery, divorce, palavers, and quarrels, and has been forbidden by certain chiefs and headmen, who would like to be able to severely punish anyone who dances it.

Conclusion

●834 The data presented in the foregoing section forces us to conclude that sexual modesty does exist among the Nkundó. The wearing of clothing, the various prohibitions, the attitude of the older and wiser members of the community show that they experience this feeling. It is the same here as elsewhere. In certain areas it is even carried to an extreme. The exceptions should be attributed to individual deviations; and because of the reactions they provoke, they even provide conclusive evidence. The general laxity which may be observed on some special occasions does not provide material for a serious objection against the existence of modesty. Yet it is difficult to determine the reason for such an attitude which seems to contradict the rest of our data. Should it be interpreted as a yielding to human weakness, or seen as a weakening of public morality? Or is it not rather because these special circumstances make an unfavorable interpretation of such actions impossible? An allusion made in public, in a group, [64] does not have the same significance as that same allusion may have between two people, where it implies a suspicious intimacy.

834 178 It goes without saying that the feeling of sexual modesty and its various manifestations among these people are being transformed by two different currents. On the one hand, their moral laxity is increased by their contact with all sorts of other peoples, by a greater freedom, by the partial emancipation of women, and by the attraction of the large centers and their luxury. On the other hand, there is the preaching of Christian morality, although its effects are still very slight and certainly do not counterbalance the influences mentioned above.

Article II. Preparation for Sexual Life

1. The Woman's preparation

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When a girl wishes to indulge in pleasures of the flesh, she prepares her sexual organs in advance. The preparation itself consists of "opening the way" (lifola mbɔ́ka). This operation, which is repeated several times, is performed in hiding, preferably in the forest. The girl may or may not have companions with her who share her intentions. Each girl operates on herself. In order to gradually [824] enlarge the organ, a girl uses progressively thicker shoots of the bosáánga or bokaakɔ́ plant (Costus afer), making sure first to remove the tip. Later these shoots are replaced by the lombɔ́lɛ́ fruit of the bosɔ̆ombɔ́ plant (Aframomum) or, more infrequently, by a young manioc tuber.

This is the general practice; exceptions are few or nonexistent. It is followed because the girls want the event to which they aspire to occur without difficulty (bálota báfɔ́v'ɔ̆́keela).

833 515 In addition to this basic preparation, girls [65] also wash the private parts of their bodies. This is a cleanliness measure which they continue to practice save in exceptional cases for the rest of their lives. According to my informants, the native woman -- as a very general rule -- stresses this cleanliness as much for herself as for the sake of not repelling her husband or lover. When a girl begins to practice this personal hygiene, it is a sign that she wants to begin her sexual life.

Article III. Relations between Spouses; Their Various Rights and Duties

593 x 833 Spouses are obliged to fulfill the duties and perform the tasks incumbent upon them .

It is difficult to say just how far the sense of duty to fulfill the debitum conjugale extends among the Nkundó. Normally, they very frequently fulfill this obligation toward each other. But after a good quarrel they abstain, either through mutual consent or because one of them refuses. If one of the parties fails seriously and repeatedly [586] in this respect, the question is resolved by a divorce. The response to temporary lapses is limited to reprimands, disputes, blows, and other common reactions. It should be added that continence is required [134] during the ekelé period after the birth of a child and after setting up a new hunting enclosure (lokombo) or a new fishing weir (bosaka), before the third piece of a game or fish is caught.

1. Meals

593 x 264 A couple never take their meals together. The husband eats the food prepared for him and served to him by his wife alone, with his grown sons, or with friends or relatives. The wife herself eats with her small children, her daughters, or her female relatives. The two sexes never mingle at meals.

593 x 521 The same rule applies to talks, but it is much less strictly maintained; it is not rare to find that, for one reason or another, women participate in the conversation of men.

It will not be long before, through the influence of Christianity, [266] women will generally be admitted in the conversations of the opposite sex. Developments with respect to mixed meals will come with much more difficulty; in practice the question has not even been broached.

593 x 348 [354] Thus one finds a kitchen next to the bedroom or separated from the hut; in addition to being the place where food is prepared, it is where the woman spends her day. The kitchen is sometimes a structure separated from the dwelling itself, sometimes a part of the house separated from the bedroom by a partition containing a door.

593x 577 762 themselves of the usual and ordinary obligations incumbent upon them on the death of a son-in-law. Should this be taken as a kind of implied condemnation of suicide? [278]

593x 578 967 626 The wisdom of the elders recommends to youth that they not let anger lead them to brutal acts even where, legally, it is permissible to use force. They do not act in such a way through a policy of adaptation to the present regime. Even before the arrival of the white men, they gave lessons in calm and self-mastery. For serious blows, wounds, and especially homicide could have deplorable consequences legally and even politically (war). They preferred recourse to punishments, such as abstention from food and the refusal of debitum conjugale, which although less violent are not without efficacity. In that way they were also spared the vexation of in-laws, whose pity would be aroused by the wounds and bodily suffering of their child or sister.

578 593x One thing that deserves blows or a good whipping because it is considered a serious failure in the fulfillment of the duties of married life is indifference and negligence in housework. A husband may safely deal forcefully with the situation, although he must first inform the qualified authorities. The following are some examples of such faults: the wife does not give the necessary attention to the kitchen, her children, the cleaning of the hut and court; she neglects her crops, does not go fishing, makes no attempt to obtain salt, etc.; in short, she does not give the required time and care to the tasks incumbent upon her. She herself, her children, and her house remain disgustingly filthy, her fields and banana groves are invaded by weeds and her pantry is devoid of utensils and food, while she wastes her time doing nothing or rather spends it running about the village, going to one woman's house, chatting with another, spending the better part of her day gossiping. The Nkundó does not put up with this sort of behavior, and no one can reproach him. Even other men and the woman's companions condemn [279] such conduct. Often the woman is ridiculed, and on occasion she may [834] hear unflattering comments such as bǒmot'ǒw'asolǒ, efufa etɛngamaka, "a gossip, her cloth is to the side," that is, the interminable chatting

595x 578 834 to which she devotes her time, sitting on a couch or a log, so occupies her attention that she is no longer aware that her narrow garment is no longer in its proper modest position, and the gossip is therefore exposed to shame and ridicule.

593x 578 In addition to giving his wife a good whipping, the husband also brings out his vocabulary of invective and sarcasm. The woman does not run the risk of complaining, for she knows in advance that she will be placed in the wrong. Nevertheless, the discreet husband will not go too far. The elders suggest that the young people moderate the violence of their expressions. For, they say, "a woman is more sensitive to it than a man; she might go and hang herself in the forest," lǐkinya ǎyakǒma lǒí la nsǒnyi, "lǐkinya (the ant) will [825] hang herself one day out of an excess of shame" (this is a reference to the way this insect bites into a blade of grass or some other object and dies rather than let go). "And above all," they say, "do not extend your insults to your wives' parents, for they could urge their daughters to leave you."

With respect to adultery, the punishments prescribed in Nkundǒ law will be examined below in Article VIII.

It is apparent from the preceding description that the Nkundǒ attach relatively little importance to the outpourings of loquacious eloquence characteristic of the weaker sex as long as they do not go beyond limits or degenerate into outrageous and ignominious insults. The elders teach youth to be calm in the face of these demonstrations of the declamatory art at which most Negresses are as adept as our fishwives at home.

They say that a woman is like an elephant: bǒmoto ale [562] ǒ njoku. There is nothing to be done about her. It is futile [280] to try and speak gently to her; she does not even listen. To impose silence on her is impossible. To try and calm her, make her listen to reason, is a waste of effort. It is the same with an elephant: He [825] can perhaps be chased away with cries and noise, but he will destroy the crops nonetheless.

The fact that a woman readily opens her mouth is not considered a sign that she does not love her husband. The Nkundǒ even

684 movement and therefore serves as the Nkundɔ́ prison. But in addition, if it is applied for a long time, it becomes a real torture; the skin becomes painful and comes off, inflammations readily appear, and bugs sometimes lodge there.

As soon as the woman's family hears (through the ndonga) that she is being so tortured, they often come and beg her husband to [576] free her. To pacify and propitiate him, they offer him an ad hoc payment, that is, a boɔ́ndo of a few copper rings. Generally, he yields to their entreaties. A good relationship and his respect toward them require that he not remain indifferent to their supplications, especially as he needs them for the stability of the marriage and the good functioning of the household.

2) Byéngetanyi, or handcuffs, which consist of sticks attached either to the wrists or to the ankles (to prevent walking), or to both arms and feet. Two sticks were used, one above and one below, with the limb placed in between, and they were tied with ropes that were attached and fastened in notches made at [317] each end of the sticks. In rare instances the wrists were bound. To increase the pain and immobility, the ropes were shrunk and hardened by pouring water on them. These handcuffs were generally added to the etáka and were never applied alone.

3) Exposure to the bites of nkongɔ́tɔ́ ants. In the region under [184] discussion, I have never heard the people speak of exposure to bafumba (Dorylus), or even to the venomous benkɔ́nkɔ́me. This fact contrasts with the practice of other Mɔ́ngo tribes and with the content of certain legends (evolution?).

4) The pouring of water containing pepper into the vagina. Sometimes the genital organs were rubbed with crushed pepper.

5) Exposure of the sex organs to fire. A burning log was held near them.

The last two types of torture were the most dreadful.

We can add one last form of punishment which is derived from the same legal rules, although it is not a torture:

[634] 6) Nudity. The husband tears off the guilty woman's garments and thus exposes her to public shame. Even if she resorts to using leaves, no one mistakes the situation, and her shame is only partly reduced.

C. Against a husband and his accomplice. There is no specific sanction in Nkundɔ̌ law against a husband's adultery, [323] but an outraged wife may take revenge on him, as on her rival. Her weapons against her husband include invective, the refusal of food, drink, baths, and finally of debitum conjugale. These are appreciable punishments about which the husband can in no way complain, for he would be found entirely in the wrong. The woman's actions stem from a legitimate jealousy. Sometimes her feeling becomes so intense that she tears off her clothing and stands before her husband completely naked; this shames him greatly and constitutes a stinging reproach. Invectives flow out of the wife's mouth in torrents: ilolɛ́ inɛ́, itutula inɛ́, inyanyama inɛ́, owá lóí ô ndá nyongo, ndá ntɛ́mbɔ́, "that imbecile, that good for nothing, that beast, one day you'll die of penalties, of being caught in flagrante delicto . . . ." Then there is a whole string of the usual insults. Our Nkundɔ̌ say that the more abundant the insults, the greater is the woman's love. She may carry on like this for days, even for weeks. Her responses to her husband's adultery are thus of the same sort as those she makes use of under other circumstances.

If a jealous wife sets fire to the hut in which her husband yielded to his passion, no one can reproach her. The damage was caused on her husband's account.

Against the woman accomplice, the wife may use more violent means. She may fight her, strike her, even injure her. The rival's husband will demand a liombo, or payment "for blows and wounds," which has to be paid not by the wife's family, but by the guilty husband. Thus in the final analysis it is again he who is punished. If the offending woman is killed, it is again the unfaithful husband who is obliged to pay an indemnity to the widower. (See Article II.)

One form of punishment to which a wife likes to have recourse to take revenge on her adulterous husband and his accomplice if she catches them in the act is to pour a pot of hot or boiling water on their bodies. [324]

3. The period of prohibitions

843 When a pregnancy is far advanced -- about two or three months before delivery (a period which has now been reduced to one or two weeks) -- the Nkundó proceed with the "preservation of the fetus" (báomba jémi, "they preserve the fetus," or báaka jémi, "they fasten the fetus"). The period called bokeka or bokeko begins at that moment and does not end until after childbirth. The oral expression is lémba bokeka, "to bind the period of sexual prohibitions." (1) This term also extends to all special

● [834]

1. The expression lémba lúmbá is also used. A similar period of sexual prohibitions called by the same name still exists for, among other things, circumcision, the construction of a hunting enclosure, and the setting of elephant traps.

prohibitions (bikilá) resulting from this condition. [475]

For the first pregnancy the period begins with the following [386] ceremony: The woman's mother smears her daughter's head and [302] all of her body with a red paint called ngóla. This paint, usually used as make-up, is used here as a mark of affection and given to honor and congratulate the future mother on this happy occasion. When the ngóla is somewhat hardened, the mother smears her daughter's hair with it and rolls the hair into little balls, using an iron bosóngó, which is the instrument usually used for hairdressing. Then she gives her daughter a hen and some bananas to eat. From then on the pregnant woman may no longer eat hens, for the con- [825] sumption of this bird (which the Nkundó place in the same category as ducks) and its eggs would stop the normal development of the fetus. The ceremony is called fla bongata (eleku among the Bombwanja), "to smear with red paint in little balls."

The woman's father and the husband's kin feel strongly about being present at this ceremony, for it is considered very important. I know of an intense palaver which occurred because

846
[589] For a young unmarried mother, the meal is prepared by a girl who has not reached puberty or a woman who is quite old, that is, by someone who does not engage in sexual intercourse.

2) Various regulations. From the time of the preparation of the first meal until the end of the bokeka, that is, until the day the umbilical cord becomes detached, the hearth of the seclusion hut is sacred, so to speak. Apart from the couple and the assistants, no one may enjoy it or profit from it, either to light anything from it or eat anything that has been prepared there. However, some men have a means of lifting the prohibition pertaining to the fire. Upon the hearth and all the hearths of the village or a group of houses, depending on the situation, they let fall a few drops of a special concoction.

It is also forbidden to sweep or pick up the ashes from the fire. Everything must stay put until the umbilical cord of the newborn child becomes detached.

During the entire period of seclusion, the mother is assisted by a kinswoman (or one of her husband's kinswomen; among the Bombwanja there are always two), who is the wujisa, "the one who makes the seclusion" (from the verb uja). The seclusion should not be thought of as that of a hermit; the mother may go out as soon as her condition permits, and the helper goes about her occupations, but she does not do so more than necessary. Rather the hut is a house of prohibitions.

During this period the mother and her helper do not do farm
● [834] work. In addition they must abstain from carnal relations and from all contacts with the opposite sex, in conformity with the customs explained in Article II, 3, above. The ekelé extends to the husband and to any other person who enters the hut. Any infraction results in the death of the mother or the child in the same manner as in the case of the bokeka (see loc. cit) . [488]

3) The end of the bokeka. When, at the end of four or five days, the umbilical cord becomes detached, the news is announced to the whole village, so that everyone may go back to their
[833] work that has been suspended. The following night the father and mother perform the conjugal act to "destroy the bokeka and

846 taking the child would cause the child's death. The same precau-
789 tion is also in order if the husband goes on a trip before the child's birth and does not return till after the delivery

We have just seen that the harmful effects of the father's
946 misconduct on his child's life is effectuated through the father's
837 act of taking the child on his knees. Thus the Nkundó speak of baóngó b'ábé, "a father's bad knees," to indicate his reprehensible
[826] conduct, and they say that the bondandota potion is administered to the child so that it will not die because of the father's bad knees. (1)

1. The expression baóngó b'ábé is also used when an undertaking which requires continence is unsuccessful. (See Article II, 3).

When a child has painful and persistent diarrhea, it is often
753 interpreted as the effect of the father's infidelity. As soon as they
954 become aware of it, the couple separate for some time, and the father no longer touches the child. [492]

Contrary to what one reads on this subject about other peo-
837 ples of the Congo, Nkundó couples do not have to remain continent
834 beyond the period of seclusion. The separation ceremony gives the
789 husband back the freedom of action he had before his wife's pregnancy. For the wife the bokeka remains strict with respect to illicit relations until the child is weaned However she, too, may regain her freedom by having recourse to an antidote, the ingredients of which she purchases from a person who holds the secret. The ingredients are placed in a small antelope horn which is then stopped
[824] up by means of bolaká (resin from the Symphonia gabonensis). The interested party wears it about her loins on a string or a bead belt or, preferably, on a special creeper. This amulet protects the child's life from the harmful influence of the mother's acts of adultery, but it does so only on condition that she does not separate herself from the child, as we will explain further on. This procedure

837 is not morally condoned, and a woman who resorts to it does not
834 escape criticism. She is compared to a goat, who does not have
789 a regular and steady husband: álómya bǒna lontaa, "she nurses her child as a goat does." (1)

1. The opposite of lómya lontaa, -- if it is used to show the contrast -- is lómya lontómbá.

When the separation ceremony is ended, the mother is
846 adorned with all her ornaments and goes out to walk in a procession through the village. The child is carried by an older sister, a niece, etc. He is taken around the village, bánangya bǒna l'olólo Small presents are offered him everywhere -- an arrow, a small knife, a hairpin, etc There is no feast, however; if that honor were accorded him he would die of it (for when someone dies, there is always a feast of farewell in his honor). [493]

Article IV. Nursing

853 During the first few days after birth an infant does not suck the milk of its mother, since it is "too hot." He is fed by a third person, preferably a relative.

On the third day the following occurs:

953 1) The mother's breasts are massaged (-kulola baéle). For
757 this purpose the Nkundó use leaves of the bǔte creeper and the lilongyá plant (Adenostemma viscosum Forst.), a green leaf from a banana tree called nselenge, several pieces of peeled sugar cane, the tips of the dried leaves of any banana tree, and sometimes other plants are added as well. All the ingredients are crushed, then boiled, and white sand and a bit of red paint are mixed in with them. The mixture is called ndengó. It is prepared by the women who are in charge of massaging the breasts. The bǔte leaves, however, must be picked by the father. He goes to the forest early in the morning and first shakes the creeper so that all leaves that are not firmly attached will fall off. Then he climbs it and picks the desired